

Congressional Mandate

The DARPA Grand Challenge for autonomous robotic ground vehicles is the first in a series of grand challenges designed to reward scientific and technological achievement with cash prizes. The program was established in Congressional legislation, and is summarized the following excerpt:

“Prizes for achievements in promoting science, mathematics, engineering, or technology education

“The Secretaries of the military departments and the heads of defense agencies may each carry out a program to award cash prizes in recognition of outstanding achievements that are designed to promote science, mathematics, engineering, or technology education in support of the missions of the U.S. Department of Defense.”

-National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (H.R. 4546, Sec. 2374b)

The decision to make the first DARPA Grand Challenge focused on autonomous robotic ground vehicles also reflects a Congressional mandate summarized below:

“Unmanned Advanced Capability Aircraft and Ground Combat Vehicles

It shall be a goal of the Armed Forces to achieve the fielding of unmanned, remotely controlled technology such that by 2015, one-third of the operational ground combat vehicles of the Armed Forces are unmanned.”

-National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (S. 2549, Sec. 217)